

UTILITY APPLICATION

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FOR

UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

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BY NOEL P. HORKAN

FOR

FOOTBALL KICKING TRAINING AID

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FOOTBALL KICKING TRAINING AID

Abstract

A football kicking training aid comprises a modified football having an attached
5 patch on one or both ends, with Velcro.RTM. loop elements therein. The
football is supported in place, for kicking by another player, by a user wearing a
thimble or glove having Velcro.RTM. hook elements only at a fingerpad area
thereof. The restriction of the Velcro.RTM. elements to the football patch and
the fingerpad area of the glove or thimble urges the user to support the football
10 only at the patch, and to continue supporting the football until the kicking action
has been completed.

Background of the Invention

This invention relates to a training aid and, more particularly, to a modified
football and thimble or glove combination which assists in teaching a player to
15 correctly support a football while another player kicks the football.
The effective supporting of a football, placed on the ground or a tee while it is
kicked, is not always readily learned, particularly in the case of a young or
novice football player. The younger or novice player is more likely to withdraw
support of the football or to flinch, causing the football to fall or move from its
20 preferable position, as the other player approaches the football. This type of ball
movement results in incorrect football supporting techniques that must later be
corrected. Thus, the correct placement of the supporter's fingerpad atop the
football is an important aspect in correctly supporting a football for kicking by
another player and maintaining that correct support. Accordingly, it is desirable
25 to present a training aid which urges an initial, correct interaction between the
supporter's fingerpad and the football which enhances the development of a
proper supporting action, and the continuation of that support throughout the
kicking action.

Known prior art devices have not addressed the above problems. Various
30 patents disclose devices and complex apparatus designed to hold footballs in
proper orientation for kicking. Such devices and apparatus are aimed at training

of the kicker, not of the player supporting the football while it is kicked. (U. S. Pat. No. 4,949,973; U. S. Pat. No. 5,435,572; U. S. Pat. No. 4,807,880; U. S. Pat. No. 4,477,077; U. S. Pat. No. 4,632,395; U. S. Pat. No. 4,033,581; U. S. Pat. No. 5,553,855; U. S. Pat. No. 5,488,780; U. S. Pat. No. 4,711,043; U. S. Pat. No. 5,280,922).

Brief Summary of the Invention

In response to the needs described I have invented a training aid in the form of a modified football and a modified thimble or glove. The modified football has attached at one or both pointed ends a patch or patches having one element of a Velcro.RTM. fastener combination thereon. A flexible thimble or glove has the complementary mating elements of the Velcro.RTM. fastener combination only at one fingerpad area thereof. The use of the Velcro.RTM. in a patch or patches only on the pointed end or ends of the football forces the thimbled or gloved user to properly support the football only at such patch. The Velcro.RTM. patch or patches do not interfere with the normal game play by ungloved players.

It is therefore a general object of this invention to provide a training aid in the form of a modified football and modified thimble or glove combination which assists in proper support of a football during a place kick action.

A further object of this invention is to provide a training aid, as aforesaid, which does not interfere with normal game play by ungloved players.

Still another object of this invention is to provide a training aid, as aforesaid, which improves the user's support and control of the football while it is being supported for kicking.

Other objects and advantages of this invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein is set forth by way of illustration and example, an embodiment of this invention.

Brief Description of the Drawings

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing a user supporting a modified football with one index finger in a modified flexible thimble;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view showing a user supporting a modified football with one index finger in a modified flexible glove.

Description of the Preferred Embodiment

- 5 Turning more particularly to the drawings, FIG. 1 shows the football **1** modified by attachment of patches **2** at both pointed ends of said football, having Velcro.RTM. fastener elements thereof preferably of the loop-type design, the loop type elements being less susceptible to damage or sticking to clothing or other items during game play. FIG. 1 also shows the football **1** resting on the
- 10 ground **3** and being supported by the fingerpad of a user's index finger **4** in a modified flexible thimble **5**, having an attachment of a pad **6** having Velcro RTM fastener elements complementary to the fastener elements of the patches **2**. The complementary Velcro.RTM mating fastener elements of the pad **6** are preferably of the hook type design.
- 15 An alternate design of the modified football **1** has one Velcro.RTM. patch, which the user orients at the top of football **1**. It is also understood that a combination of hook and loop elements may be used such that elements on the patch or patches **2** are of hook type design and elements on the pad **6** are of loop type design.
- 20 FIG. 2 shows the football **1** modified by attachment of patch or patches **2** having Velcro.RTM. fastener elements thereof preferably of the loop-type design, the loop type elements being less susceptible to damage or sticking to clothing or other items during game play. FIG. 2 also shows the football **1** resting on the ground **3** and being supported by the fingerpad of a user's index finger **7** in a
- 25 modified flexible glove **8**, having an attachment of a pad **9** having Velcro RTM fastener elements complementary to the fastener elements of the patch or patches **2**. The complementary Velcro.RTM mating fastener elements of the pad **9** are preferably of the hook type design.
- It is also understood that a combination of hook and loop elements may be used
- 30 such that elements on the patch or patches **2** are of hook type design and elements on the pad **9** are of loop type design.

The restriction of the Velcro.RTM. loop elements to the patch or patches 2 of the football 1 is important. No Velcro.RTM. materials are positioned elsewhere on the football as shown in prior patents (U. S. Pat. No. 5,570,882; U. S. Pat. No. 5,183,263; U. S. Pat. No. 5,195,745). Accordingly, the mating of the

5 Velcro.RTM. elements on the flexible thimble 5 or flexible glove 8 occurs only when the football 1 is properly supported by a thimbled or gloved user at the patch 2 of football 1. This restriction urges an initial proper FIG. 1 or FIG. 2 support of the football 1 by a thimbled or gloved user only at the patch 2 as the thimbled or gloved user cannot obtain the tactile feedback of attachment if

10 supporting the football elsewhere.

The flexible thimble 5 may be of any resilient material, but the preferred embodiment is that the material be a natural or synthetic rubber. It is important that the pad 6 be found only at a lateral area of the thimble, said area being positioned by the user adjacent to the fingerpad of the user's index finger. The

15 glove 8 may be of any flexible material, it being important that the pad 9 is found only at the lateral area of the index finger adjacent to the fingerpad. This placement of the pad 6 or 9 cooperates with the above-described patch 2 of the football 1 to again assure that the football is properly supported by the fingerpad of the index finger of the user.

20 Accordingly, upon supporting the football 1 by the index finger 4, as shown in FIG. 1, the ball 1 is properly supported and not unstable as often found with the younger or novice user. Of course, the degree of interaction between the mating Velcro.RTM. elements on the patch 2 and pad 6 or 9 must be minimal so as to not to interfere with the release of the football 1.

25 It is to be understood that while certain forms of this invention have been illustrated and described, it is not limited thereto except insofar as such limitations are included in the following claims and allowable functional equivalents thereof.